

ARTICLE APPEARED
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USA TODAY
15 NOVEMBER 1982

Espionage:

'Silicon Valley prime target' for Soviet high-tech piracy

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USA TODAY

The United States must act quickly to halt the theft of America's advanced technology, particularly in California's "Silicon Valley," a prime target of Soviet spies, a congressional report said Sunday.

Soviet agents have acquired

critical information about micro-electronic, laser, radar and precision equipment manufacturing in the Silicon Valley, the report said.

About \$100 million in thefts of electronic technology and commodities have occurred in Santa Clara County over the last five years, Deputy District Attorney Douglas K. Southard told the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The leaks have "permitted the Soviets to systematically build a modern micro-electronics industry," the report states.

The problem "threatens our national security," said subcommittee Chairman William Roth, R-Del.

American safeguards have been "largely unfocused and overly broad in scope," said Georgia Sen. Sam Nunn, senior Democratic member of the subcommittee.

"We have undercover agents in many plants," said Jay Beardslee, a supervisor at California Plant Protection Inc., which guards about 75 percent

of the plants in Silicon Valley.

Responsibility for restricting the export of electronic information should be taken away from the "ineffective" Commerce Department, the report recommended. Instead, the responsibility should shift to the Customs Service which has agents trained to search for trade violations.